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# Beyond Words: A Literature Review on Pragmatics in Cross-Cultural Communication and Its Impact on Employee Performance

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### Abstract

Effective cross-cultural communication is essential in today's globalized workplace, where employees from diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds interact daily. Pragmatics, which examines how meaning is conveyed beyond literal words, plays a crucial role in ensuring mutual understanding and minimizing misinterpretations. This literature review explores the intersection of pragmatics and cross-cultural communication, analyzing its impact on employee performance. Key aspects such as speech acts, implicature, politeness strategies, and context-dependent meaning are examined in relation to workplace dynamics. Findings suggest that pragmatic competence enhances collaboration, reduces conflicts, and fosters a more inclusive work environment, ultimately improving employee productivity and job satisfaction. However, challenges such as cultural biases, misaligned communication expectations, and power distance issues may hinder effective pragmatic adaptation. The review highlights the need for targeted training programs and organizational policies that promote pragmatic awareness to optimize intercultural workplace interactions. Future research should further investigate industry-specific applications and the role of technology in facilitating pragmatic competence across cultures.

**Keywords:** Pragmatics, Cross-Cultural Communication, Employee Performance, Workplace Interaction, Intercultural Competence

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### A. INTRODUCTION

## **Beyond Words: A Literature Review on Pragmatics in Cross-Cultural Communication and Its Impact on Employee Performance**

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In today's globalized work environment, affective communication is essential for organizational success. However, communication extends beyond mere language proficiency; it involves pragmatic competence, which encompasses the ability to interpret and convey intended meanings appropriately within specific social and cultural contexts. Pragmatics plays a crucial role in cross-cultural communication, where differences in linguistic norms, politeness strategies, and indirectness levels can lead to misunderstandings or misinterpretations (Handoko et al., 2022).

In the era of globalization, cross-cultural communication is becoming an increasingly important aspect in a diverse work environment. As interactions between individuals from different cultural backgrounds increase, understanding pragmatics in cross-cultural communication becomes crucial. Pragmatics is not only concerned with the structure of language, but also includes implicit meaning, social context, and cultural norms that influence the way individuals communicate. Failure to understand pragmatic aspects can lead to misunderstandings, which ultimately impact employee performance and organizational effectiveness (Lacárcel et al., 2024).

Pragmatics in cross-cultural communication covers various aspects, including the use of appropriate language, understanding implied meaning, and awareness of different cultural norms. In a multinational work environment, employees often have to interact with coworkers, superiors, or clients from different cultures. Therefore, the ability to adapt communication to different cultural contexts becomes a highly valuable skill (Ravi & Yuan, 2024).

One of the main challenges in cross-cultural communication is differences in language use and interpretation of meaning. For example, in some cultures, communication is direct and explicit, while in other cultures, communication tends to be indirect and relies on implied meanings. This mismatch in how messages are delivered can lead to tension, misunderstandings, and even conflict in the workplace (Kim & Bruhn, 2023).

Literature discussing pragmatics in cross-cultural communication shows that a high awareness of pragmatics can increase communication effectiveness and strengthen professional relationships. Employees who have good pragmatic competence are better able to navigate cultural differences, avoid misunderstandings, and build more harmonious collaboration with their colleagues. Thus, understanding pragmatics is a key factor in creating an inclusive and productive work environment (Reedy, 2023).

Apart from that, pragmatics in cross-cultural communication also plays a role in shaping individual perceptions and attitudes in the workplace. The way a person communicates can influence how they are perceived by colleagues and superiors. For example, using language that is polite and in line with cultural norms can increase respect and trust in the work environment, while pragmatic errors can reduce a person's credibility (Akdogan & Anbar, 2025).

The impact of pragmatics in cross-cultural communication on employee performance also cannot be ignored. Research shows that employees who are able to adapt their communications to specific cultural contexts tend to be more successful in team collaboration, negotiation, and conflict management. On the other hand, an inability to understand pragmatic aspects can hinder communication, reduce work efficiency, and even affect individual job satisfaction (Rizvanović et al., 2023).

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In an increasingly globally connected business world, organizations need to provide training and development of cross-cultural communication skills to their employees. Training programs that cover pragmatic aspects of communication can help employees understand cultural differences, develop adaptation skills, and increase their communication effectiveness in multicultural work environments (Xu et al., 2024).

This article aims to review literature that discusses the role of pragmatics in cross-cultural communication and its impact on employee performance. By analyzing various studies that have been conducted, this article will identify the main challenges, strategies that can be implemented, and the practical implications of pragmatics in cross-cultural communication in the work environment (Daradkeh et al., 2024).

By understanding the importance of pragmatics in cross-cultural communication, organizations can design more effective communication policies and strategies. This will not only improve individual performance but also create an organizational culture that is more inclusive, collaborative and adaptive to global change (Kaur et al., 2023).

Ultimately, a deeper understanding of pragmatics in cross-cultural communication can provide valuable insights for practitioners, academics, and organizational leaders in managing human resources more effectively. Therefore, it is hoped that this literature review can contribute to the development of better communication strategies in an increasingly diverse and dynamic work environment (Chauhan et al., 2024).

Cross-cultural pragmatics explores how individuals from diverse cultural backgrounds navigate communication challenges, including variations in speech acts, conversational implicatures, and discourse structures. These differences can influence workplace interactions, employee collaboration, and overall performance. Misalignment in pragmatic expectations may lead to reduced teamwork efficiency, conflicts, and decreased job satisfaction, ultimately affecting organizational productivity (Subramanian et al., 2023).

This literature review examines existing research on pragmatics in cross-cultural communication and its implications for employee performance. It highlights key theories, such as Grice's Cooperative Principle and Speech Act Theory, and explores how cultural variations impact workplace interactions. By synthesizing relevant studies, this review aims to provide insights into how pragmatic competence can enhance workplace communication, foster collaboration, and improve employee performance in multicultural organizations. (Nickko Ronalddo & Amalina Rizqi, 2024).

## **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

This study employs a quantitative research approach, which as defined by (Cahyadi, 2022), refers to a type of research characterized by a systematic, planned and structured process, from the initial stages through to the design and execution of the research. The quantitative method is used to investigate a specific population or sample with data collection carried out through research instrument. Statistical or quantitative data analysis is then performed to test the hypotheses formulated.

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The research is designed as a correlational study, which seeks to explore the relationships between two or more variables, whether positive or negative and whether unidirectional or bidirectional. The data analysis approach used is the verification theory which involves validating theories from previous research.

The primary source of data in this research is questionnaire which will be analyzed to understand the relationships between the tested variables. For data analysis, the Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) technique is applied. This study uses Partial Least Square (PLS) for the SEM analysis and the software SmartPLS 3.2.9 is used to perform the necessary calculation and testing.

## POPULATION

The population in this study comprises the support staff at Soekarno-Hatta International Airport under the management of PT Angkasa Pura II Group. The support staff includes individuals working in various roles such a Cleaning Service, Operation Maintenance, Baggage Service, Terminal Inspection Service, Trolley Collectors, Digital Technicians, Contact Center Staff and Shuttle Bus Service Staff. The total population consists of 1.709 individuals.

## SAMPLE

A sample is a representation of the size and composition of a population as defined by (Cahyadi, 2022). According to Ferdinand in (Amin et al., 2023), the following formula should be used to determine the sample size for Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) analysis:

1. Maximum Likelihood Estimation requires 100-200 samples.
2. The minimum number of respondents is 100.
3. It depends on the number of indicators used in all latent variables. The sample is  $(k \times k + 1) / 2$  or multiplied by 10.

This research uses 21 indicators, so the minimum sample size should be  $21 \times 5 = 105$  or if multiplied by 10, the sample size would be  $21 \times 10 = 210$ . Therefore, the sample size ranges from 105 to 210 respondents. The author decided to sleect 105 respondents based on the calculations. This is done to anticipate the possibility of invalid samples.

## B. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

### DATA DESCRIPTION

This study presents a general overview of the respondents to provide a description of the characteristics of the individuals who completed the questionnaire. The tabulation results show the characteristics of the respondents based on the information that has been obtained:

#### *Age*

**Table 3. Distribution of Respondents Based on Age**

No	Age	Total	Percentage (%)
1.	20 - 25 Tahun	19	18,10
2.	26 – 30 Tahun	39	37,14
3.	31 - 35 Tahun	47	44,76
<b>Total</b>		<b>105</b>	<b>100</b>

*Source: Processed Data*

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Table 3 shows the profile of respondents based on age, it is known that the respondents from Soekarno-Hatta International Airport are predominantly aged between 31 to 35 years. Employees in this age can be categorized as senior staff or employees with more experience in their field.

## Gender

**Table 4. Distribution of Respondents Based on Gender**

No	Gender	Total	Percentage (%)
1.	Male	50	47,62
2.	Female	55	52,68
<b>Total</b>		<b>105</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Processed Data

Table 2 shows the profile of the respondents based on gender, it is known that the respondents from Soekarno-Hatta International Airport are predominantly female with 55 respondents. Women are often perceived to prefer jobs as employees because they tend to favor stable, routine work environment with job security. This can provide a sense of security and stability for them and their families. Therefore, it is understandable that there are more females than males in this context.

## Recent Level of Education

**Table 5. Distribution of Respondents Based on Recent Level of Education**

No	Recent Level of Education	Total	Percentage (%)
1.	Junior High School	7	6,67
2.	Senior High School	75	71,43
3.	Bachelor's Degree	23	21,90
<b>Total</b>		<b>105</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Processed Data

Table 4 shows the profile of respondents based on recent level of education, it is found the majority of respondents have completed senior high school. Companies often set a minimum education requirement of senior high school for certain employee positions. This is intended to ensure that employees possess the necessary knowledge and skills to perform their tasks. On the other hand, employees with a bachelor's degree tend to be more qualified in terms of management competencies.

## Length of Work

**Table 6. Distribution of Respondents Based on Length of Work**

No	Length of Work	Total	Percentage (%)
1.	1 - 2 Tahun	10	9,52
2.	3 - 4 Tahun	44	41,90
3.	5 - 6 Tahun	51	48,57
<b>Total</b>		<b>105</b>	<b>100</b>

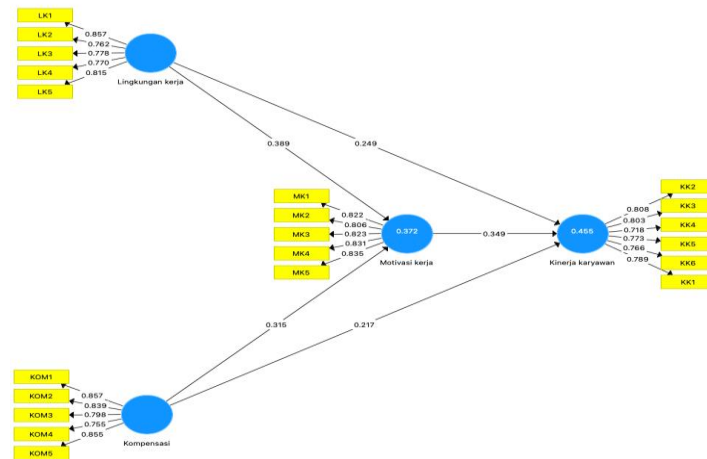
Source: Processed Data

Table 4 shows the profile of respondents based on length of work, it is found that the majority of respondents have worked for 5 to 6 years. On average, the staff at Soekarno-Hatta International Airport who have dedicated themselves for 5 to 6 years show that they have gained sufficient experience in their roles.

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## OUTER MODEL



**Figure 1. Loading Factor Manifest**

Figure 1 shows the details of the loading factor values during the convergent validity testing. Based on the results of the test on the research instrument’s question items, it was found that all research instruments had loading factor values greater than 0,5, indicating they are valid. Therefore, it can be concluded that all 21 statements items can be processed.

### Validity Test

**Table 7. Validity Test Result**

Variable	Statement Item	r-value	Sign	Description
Performance	KIN1	0,789	0,000	Valid
	KIN2	0,808	0,000	Valid
	KIN3	0,803	0,000	Valid
	KIN4	0,718	0,000	Valid
	KIN5	0,773	0,000	Valid
	KIN6	0,766	0,000	Valid
Work Motivation	MK1	0,822	0,000	Valid
	MK2	0,806	0,000	Valid
	MK3	0,823	0,000	Valid
	MK4	0,831	0,000	Valid
	MK5	0,835	0,000	Valid
Compensation	KOM1	0,857	0,000	Valid
	KOM2	0,839	0,000	Valid
	KOM3	0,798	0,000	Valid
	KOM4	0,755	0,000	Valid
	KOM5	0,855	0,000	Valid
Work Environment	LK1	0,857	0,000	Valid
	LK2	0,762	0,000	Valid
	LK3	0,778	0,000	Valid
	LK4	0,770	0,000	Valid
	LK5	0,815	0,000	Valid

Source: Processed Data

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Based on Table 5, it shows that if the calculated r-value is greater than or equal to the table r-value of 0,1614, then all 21 items of the instruments are considered valid and can be used for further analysis.

## INNER MODEL

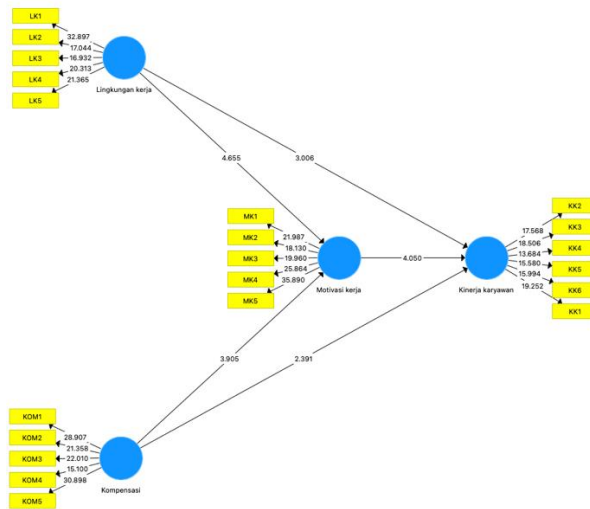


Figure 2. Inner Model Structure

Based on the calculation results using SmartPLS, the T-Statistic values obtained in this study indicate that all relationship between latent variables are positive and significant, as the T-Statistic values exceed 1,660.

## R-Square

Table 8. R<sup>2</sup> Measurement Result

	R Square	Adjusted R Square
<b>Work Motivation</b>	0,743	0,738
<b>Performance</b>	0,878	0,875

Source: Processed Data

The R-Square value for the work motivation variable is 0,743, which means that the job satisfaction variable is influenced by other variables in the model by 74,3%. The remaining 25,7% is influenced by factors outside of this model. The R-Square value for the performance variable is 0,878, which means that the performance variable is influenced by other variables in the model by 87,8%. The remaining 12,2% is influenced by factors outside of this model.

## Q-Square

Table 9. Q<sup>2</sup> Measurement Result

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	SSO	SSE	Q <sup>2</sup> (=1-SSE/SSO)	Description
Performance	4000.000	1576.497	0.613	Has a predictive relevance
Work Environment	4400.000	4400.000		
Compensation	3600.000	3600.000		
Work Motivation	4000.0000	1503.988	0.613	

Source: Processed Data

Based on the data presented in Table 7, the Q-Square value for the dependent (endogen) variable is 0,613. Based on this value, it can be concluded that this study has a good observation value, as the Q-Square value is greater than 0 (zero), specifically 0,609.

### F-Square

Table 10. F<sup>2</sup> Measurement Result

	Work Motivation	Performance	Compensation	Work Environment
Work Motivation		1,312		
Performance				
Compensation	1,579	0,011		
Work Environment	0,029	0,045		

Source: Processed Data

Based on the result of the data above, the F-Square values are interpreted as follows:

1. The relationship between work environment and work motivation has an F-Square value of 0,029, indicating a small effect.
2. The relationship between work environment and performance has an F-Square value of 0,045, indicating a small effect.
3. The relationship between work motivation and performance has an F-Square value of 1,312, indicating a large effect.
4. The relationship between compensation and work motivation has an F-Square value of 1,579, indicating a large effect.
5. The relationship between compensation and performance has an F-Square value of 0,011, indicating a small effect.

## HYPOTHESIS TEST

### Direct Effect

Table 11. Results of Direct Hypothesis Testing



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	Original Sample (O)	Sample Average (M)	Standard Deviation (STDEV)	T-Statistic ( O/STDEV )	P Values
Work Motivation -> Performance	0,788	0,790	0,072	10,975	<b>0,000</b>
Compensation -> Work Motivation	0,954	0,952	0,062	15,478	<b>0,000</b>
Compensation -> Performance	0,088	0,095	0,102	1,687	<b>0,008</b>
Work Environment -> Work Motivation	0,129	0,123	0,073	1,769	<b>0,008</b>
Work Environment -> Performance	0,112	0,106	0,060	1,882	<b>0,006</b>

Source: Processed Data

## The Effect of Work Motivation on Performance

In the Table 9, the test of work motivation variable on performance has a coefficient value of 0,788 with a T-statistic of  $10,975 \geq 1,66$  and a P-value of  $0,000 \leq 0,05$ . This indicates a positive and significant effect. If the motivation possessed by an employee is sufficiently high, their performance will improve (Yie Win, 2023). Good motivation encourages employees to maximize their performance (Nor et al., 2023).

## The Effect of Compensation on Work Motivation

In the Table 9, the test of the compensation on work motivation has a coefficient value of 0,954 with a T-statistic of  $15,478 \geq 1,66$  and a P-value of  $0,000 \leq 0,05$ . This indicates a positive and significant effect (Dwivedi et al., 2023). It means that compensation provided by the company has an impact on the level of employee work motivation. As the compensation increases, so does the work motivation of the employees (Adrin Hetharie & Rieuwpassa, 2023).

## The Effect of Compensation on Performance

In the Table 9, the test of the work-related social media on employee creativity shows a coefficient value of 0,088 with a T-statistic of  $1,687 \geq 1,66$  and a P-value of  $0,008 \leq 0,05$ , indicating a positive and significant effect. Better compensation has a positive impact on employees. In other words, when employees receive better financial rewards, they tend to work harder and become more productive (Kalyan, 2024). These results highlight the importance of designing a fair and appropriate compensation system. Organizations must ensure that employees are compensated proportionally to the work they perform (Toprak & Turan, 2024). Performance evaluations are essential for identifying high-performing employees, allowing them to be rewarded accordingly for their contributions (Hapsari, 2023).

## The Effect of Work Environment on Work Motivation

In the Table 9, the test of the knowledge sharing on employee creativity shows a coefficient value of 0,129 with a T-statistic of  $1,769 \geq 1,66$  and a P-value of  $0,008 \leq 0,05$ , indicating a positive and significant effect. The fact that the work environment has a positive and significant influence on work motivation is evident. Employees who have a conducive work environment, where their needs are met by the company and the work facilities are adequate, are more likely to increase their work motivation on their own. This can occur without the need for strict supervision, as the supportive environment fosters self-driven motivation (Barri et al., 2024).

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## The Effect of Work Environment on Performance

In the Table 9, the test of the social-related social media on employee creativity shows a coefficient value of 0,112 with a T-statistic of  $1,882 \geq 1,66$  and a P-value of  $0,006 \leq 0,05$ , indicating a positive and significant effect. The work environment plays a crucial role in ensuring infrastructure and safety, which in turn impacts employee performance. This finding highlights the need for companies to prioritize and enhance these factors in order to optimize employee performance (Goh et al., 2024).

## Indirect Effect

**Table 10. Results of Indirect Hypothesis Testing**

	Original Sample (O)	Sample Average (M)	Standard Deviation (STDEV)	T-Statistic ( O/STDEV )	P Values
Compensation -> Work Motivation -> Performance	0,752	0,753	0,090	8,370	<b>0,000</b>
Work Environment -> Work Motivation -> Performance	0,102	0,098	0,059	1,725	<b>0,009</b>

Source: Processed Data

## The Effect of Compensation on Performance through Work Motivation

The table above shows that knowledge sharing can mediate the relationship between work-related social media and employee creativity, with a path coefficient value of 0,752, T-statistic of  $8,370 \geq 1,660$  and a P-value of  $0,000 \leq 0,05$ . This indicates a significant role of compensation on performance through work motivation.

## The Effect of Work Environment on Performance through Work Motivation

The table above shows that knowledge sharing can mediate the relationship between work-related social media and employee creativity, with a path coefficient value of 0,021, T-statistic of  $1,779 \geq 1,660$  and a P-value of  $0,025 \leq 0,05$ . This indicates a significant role of work environment on performance through work motivation.

## C. CONCLUSION

This study emphasizes the importance of the work environment, compensation, and work motivation in enhancing employee performance at Soekarno-Hatta International Airport. The findings reveal that both a supportive work environment and appropriate compensation significantly improve work motivation, which directly impacts employee performance.

Specifically work motivation was found to have a large and significant positive effect on performance. Higher compensation levels were shown to increase work motivation, leading to improved employee performance. Additionally, a conducive work environment contributes to greater motivation, enabling employees to perform optimally with less supervision.

In conclusion, organizations particularly in the aviation sector, should focus on creating a favorable work environment and offering competitive compensation to enhance employee motivation and performance. These factors are critical in achieving organizational goals and delivering excellent service.

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